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TAHERI ENDS HIS UB LAW TEACHING CAREER WITH HONORS

Criminal defense attorney Michael S. Taheri spent 13 years in front of UB Law classes as an adjunct professor. But the Law School saved the best for last when it honored Taheri during Commencement ceremonies with the inaugural Kenneth F. Joyce Award for Excellence in Teaching.

The award, named for the popular SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor Emeritus, celebrates outstanding teaching. But to hear Taheri tell it, the benefits run both ways.

"I thought it would make me a better lawyer," he says of his years teaching courses in white-collar crime, New York State DWI law and law firm management. "You've got to be prepared for class, and you've got to be current on the law and be able to explain it. It's not enough to know it. You have to explain it to people who are not lawyers. If you can explain it to students, you're going to be better at dealing with clients. Making the law clear and understandable, and keeping students engaged for three hours, takes your preparation to a higher level."

Taheri, whose firm is Taheri & Todoro in Williamsville, sometimes taught three or four classes in a semester. "I loved every minute of every class I had at UB," he says in retrospect. "I never had a bad class. It's very kind of the Law School to recognize me with this award as bringing something to those students, but I was committed to them. They still e-mail me, and it's always fun when they call with some ethics question. And they invite me to a wedding now and then."



Attorney Michael S. Taheri accepts the inaugural Kenneth F. Joyce Award for Excellence in Teaching from Professor Emeritus Joyce and Professor James B. Gardner.

Taheri, who has written and published several books on the law for laymen and professionals, retired as an adjunct professor at the end of the 2009-10 academic year, but his talent for teaching and influencing lives is not going to waste. He and his wife, Josette, have gotten deeply involved as volunteers at St. Luke's Mission of Mercy in downtown Buffalo. "I felt that the skills I developed in the classroom, both academic and administrative skills, might be helpful to students and other people who are living a life of poverty," Taheri says. So, for example, he worked this year with a summer program, teaching high school students how to make a public presentation, and taking them on field trips to broaden their horizons. He has done adult literacy instruction at the mission as well.

New classroom, but still teaching.

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make me a better
lawyer."*

*— Michael S. Taheri, on
his years teaching
courses in white-collar
crime, New York State
DWI law and law firm
management*